



PRESS RELEASE

United States Secret Service
Department of Homeland Security

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U.S. SECRET SERVICE RESPONSE TO *THE GUARDIAN* REPORTING

(Washington, D.C.) On Thursday, August 2, 2018, *The Guardian* published an article by Nick Hopkins entitled, *Exclusive: suspected Russian spy found working at US embassy in Moscow*. The article is wrought with irresponsible and inaccurate reporting based on the claims of “anonymous” sources. Prior to the *Guardian* publishing their article, the U.S. Secret Service provided their editor with our official statement as well as background information clearly refuting unfounded information.

It was specifically the duties of the Foreign Service National (FSN) position in Moscow to assist our attaches and agency by engaging the Russian government, including the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), the Russian Ministry of the Interior (MVD), and the Russian Federal Protective Service (FPS) in furtherance of Secret Service interests.

U.S. Secret Service interests overseas are twofold: Establish effective working relationships with foreign law enforcement partners in furtherance of successful protective visits in the host country and, to work with foreign law enforcement counterparts in furtherance of U.S. Secret Service criminal investigations initiated in the United States.

The U.S. Secret Service recognizes that all FSNs who provide services in furtherance of our mission, administrative or otherwise, can be subjected to foreign intelligence influence. In Russia we explicitly expect FSNs to be subject to the influence or control of Russian Intelligence Services. As such, all FSNs are managed accordingly to ensure that U.S. Secret Service and United States Government (USG) interests are protected at all times. As a result, the duties are limited to translation, interpretation, cultural guidance, liaison and administrative support.

In the article, Hopkins and *The Guardian* claim the “Russian is understood to have had full access to secret data during decade at embassy.” FSNs working under the direction of the U.S. Secret Service have never been provided or placed in a position to obtain, secret or classified information as erroneously reported.

In mid-2017, U.S. State Department personnel, who manage the employment process and vet all FSNs, advised the U.S. Secret Service the access authorization for a FSN working at the direction of the U.S. Secret Service, would not be extended following the completion of a scheduled security update. The employee’s access to the Secret Service Moscow Resident Office was promptly discontinued. Reporting by the *Guardian* indicating the U.S. Secret Service failed to act on information provided by the U.S. State Department is categorically false.

Reports of the timing of the individual’s termination in question and the closing of the Secret Service Resident Office in Moscow correlate in any way are false. The U.S. Secret Service Moscow Resident Office closed in August of 2017 due to lack of cooperation from the Russian government - entirely unrelated to the termination of the FSN in question. Reports the Secret Service attempted to minimize or deliberately not disclose the U.S. State Department’s findings are categorically false.

Reporting and/or questions regarding a potential security “breach” of U.S. Secret Service systems, information or reporting is unfounded as FSNs work on, and support, only projects with the intent of providing and/or sharing the information with the Russian government in furtherance of Secret Service and USG interests.

Regarding a post-termination review and/or agency concerns regarding any reason for the termination, it should be noted that the U.S. Secret Service is not an intelligence gathering agency and relies fully on the appropriate USG entities to pursue those avenues as determined appropriate.

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For questions concerning this release, please contact the U.S. Secret Service Office of Communication and Media Relations at 202-406-5708.

The United States Secret Service was originally founded in 1865 for the purpose of suppressing the counterfeiting of U.S. currency. Now an agency within the Department of Homeland Security, the Secret Service is widely known for its protective mission in safeguarding the nation’s highest elected officials, visiting foreign dignitaries and events of national significance. Today, the Secret Service maintains a unique integrated mission of protection and investigations, as one of the premier law enforcement organizations charged with investigating cyber and financial crimes.